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ABSTRACT

A policy statement on substance abuse for Virginia higher education is presented by the Council of Higher Education in cooperation with colleges. Colleges and universities are advised to reexamine current policies for dealing with possession, use, manufacture, and distribution of illegal drugs on campus. Colleges should also review policies and practices regarding the illegal use and abuse of alcohol by students and staff. Guidelines for developing and revising college policies on substance abuse are offered to help: strengthen drug enforcement practices on campuses in cooperation with government authorities; promote substance abuse education and prevention programs in both academic and extracurricular settings; and strengthen substance abuse counseling and referral programs. Virginia colleges will also be invited to participate in various statewide initiatives. The state Council will establish a substance abuse committee, composed of campus coordinators, to help identify effective and innovative campus drug education programs, develop a checklist to help colleges design effective substance abuse enforcement policies, and explore options for obtaining federal and foundation grants to support a consortial approach to the substance abuse problem. (SW)

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Substance Abuse Statement Developed For Higher Education

At the request of Governor Baliles, the Council of Higher Education has written a substance abuse policy statement for Virginia higher education. It was developed in cooperation with the institutions, and endorsed by the Governor and the college and university presidents.

I. Creating A Higher Education Environment Free of Illegal Drug Use

The possession, use, manufacture, and distribution of illegal drugs and other controlled substances by persons in the Commonwealth's higher education community will not be tolerated. All actions consistent with the law and individual privacy rights will be taken by Virginia's institutions of higher education to eliminate illegal drugs on Virginia's campuses and to deal firmly and fairly with individuals found in violation of Virginia's statutes and federal laws pertaining to such substances.

Every Virginia college and university has policies and procedures regarding the illegal use of drugs on campus. Colleges also certify to the federal government that they have in operation a drug abuse prevention program for officers, employees and students in order to qualify for federal student aid funds. But despite present efforts, the increasing availability of illegal substances in society and on college and university campuses requires a collective and coordinated response.

No statewide set of institutional policies is appropriate for the differing student populations and circumstances of Virginia's colleges and universities. Therefore, to address the situation in the Commonwealth, each institution of higher education will reexamine its current policies for dealing with the possession, use, manufacture, and distribution of illegal drugs on campus. All members of the higher education community are asked to cooperate in this examination, with the goal of eliminating drug use on campus. In reviewing its policies, each institution will ensure that, at a minimum, the issues of **enforcement, education and prevention, and counseling and referral** are addressed. Guidelines for reviewing and revising institutional policies on substance abuse are offered in Section III of this policy statement.

II. Responsible and Legal Use of Alcoholic Beverages

Along with the reexamination of policies relating to drugs, colleges should review policies and practices regarding the illegal use and abuse of alcohol by their students, faculty and staff. Recent changes in state law raised the age at which persons legally can drink alcohol. This statutory change presents a considerable challenge to institutions. It may require new enforcement practices and disciplinary procedures. Many colleges have responded by encouraging and sponsoring social events and activities that do not involve alcoholic beverages.

Beyond strictly legal considerations, there is evidence that alcohol abuse is a growing problem, particularly among young people. Most colleges already have alcohol education and prevention programs for students and employees. These programs should be continued and strengthened. Colleges also should continue to provide counseling on alcohol abuse and to make referrals to community and health organizations with experience in dealing with alcohol abuse.

III. Guidelines for Developing or Revising Institutional Policies on Substance Abuse

A. Strengthen Drug Enforcement Practices on Campus in Cooperation with Local, State and Federal Authorities

Possession, use, manufacture, and distribution of illegal substances are crimes. Virginia's institutions of higher education will continue to cooperate with law enforcement authorities to enforce current statutes. Students, faculty and staff must be made aware that illegal involvement with drugs also can result in disciplinary action by their college or university in addition to whatever criminal penalties might be applied. Such disciplinary action may include suspension or dismissal from the institution.

Each institution should have enforcement policies, procedures, and sanctions appropriate to its needs. A clear statement of these policies, procedures, and sanctions should be distributed widely to all members of the academic community.

College and university security personnel should continue to receive special training in drug education and detection. They should strengthen their working relationships with local, state, and federal law enforcement authorities in order to maintain a coordinated effort in eliminating illegal drugs on campus.

B. Expand and Strengthen Substance Abuse Education and Prevention Programs in Both Academic and Extracurricular Environments

Students should recognize that substance abuse interferes with the ability to succeed academically and professionally. Substance abuse poses numerous threats to human health and can kill. It also is contrary to what institutions of higher education strive to attain: development of individual character; the attainment of human potential; an informed and responsible citizenry; and a respect for the laws and norms governing society. To demonstrate the higher education community's concern about drug and alcohol abuse and to make students directly aware of its dangers, each institution should commit to a continuing education and prevention program on substance abuse. The institution should publish and distribute specific information regarding the availability of such programs, including the sources of printed and audio visual resource materials, and how to obtain them.

In addition, each institution annually should sponsor educational seminars or conferences on the dangers of substance abuse. All students will be encouraged to participate in these educational activities. Because what goes on in residence halls and other places where students congregate is part of the learning that occurs in colleges and universities, the programs on some campuses may appropriately be centered around the extracurricular environment. Institutions might also choose to integrate these programs into the formal curriculum.

C. Strengthen Substance Abuse Counseling and Referral Programs

Each college and university should establish and actively publicize a system whereby students who think that they are at risk of drug or alcohol abuse can have access to appropriate counseling and referral services. These services should draw upon the knowledge of health-care and student affairs' professionals. The environment should be one in which a student may discuss substance abuse problems openly and without fear of reprisal. To the extent permissible by law, student

confidentiality should be protected.

Colleges and universities also should establish or strengthen employee assistance programs for persons working on their campuses. Administrators and other personnel who work in these programs should be sensitive to the issue of confidentiality.

College and university counseling programs should maintain a close working association with community agencies that provide counseling and treatment for substance abuse. Each institution should provide information about these agencies, organizations, and hospitals where students and other members of the higher education community may seek further assistance. In this way, it will not be necessary for the institutions to replicate counseling and treatment that often are found in local communities.

IV. Statewide Initiatives: Developing An Action Agenda

In addition to committing to a renewed effort to strengthen drug enforcement practices and to improve drug and alcohol education, counseling, and referral programs for students and employees, each of the Commonwealth's colleges and universities will be invited to participate in various statewide programs and initiatives. The Council of Higher Education will work with the state's public and private institutions as they develop programs and sponsor activities that will help eliminate substance abuse on campus.

The Council of Higher Education has asked each institution of higher education in Virginia to **appoint an official as the coordinator of substance abuse education and prevention.** With the assistance of appropriate institutional staff and committees, this person will be responsible for the review and oversight of the institution's policies on drugs and alcohol. The individual also will be the institution's liaison between the campus and the local community in efforts to eliminate substance abuse.

The Council of Higher Education will **establish a substance abuse committee**, composed of the campus coordinators. The committee will provide a forum for sharing concerns and ideas among institutions. At present, few opportunities exist for institutions to seek common solutions to the substance abuse problem. The committee will hold conferences and workshops, as appropriate, to focus attention on the problem and to determine future statewide strategies. The committee's work and activities will be evaluated at the end of two years. Activities of the committee may include:

- Identifying effective and innovative drug education programs on Virginia's campuses and campuses throughout the nation. These programs should be the focus of a publicity campaign so that campus officials throughout Virginia and in other states can learn about successful approaches to resolving substance abuse.
- Developing a checklist to help institutions design effective substance abuse enforcement policies. Institutions should explore ways of developing closer working relationships between university police and local, state, and federal law enforcement authorities.
- Exploring possibilities for obtaining federal and foundation grant money to support a consortial approach to meeting the objectives spelled out in this policy statement. The committee will work with Virginia's association of campus police to encourage these working relationships, which might include a statewide drug information hotline and a formal network for tracking drug traffickers.

Virginia's institutions of higher education will be asked to **establish partnership arrangements with local high schools.** For example, college students with sufficient training on substance abuse might serve informally as advisors to high school students. College students already involved in work with high school students, such as student-teacher interns and volunteer tutors, also could serve as excellent informal counselors to these younger students. College and university student government associations and other campus organizations can be of great assistance in this effort.

Academic Coordinators Join Staff; Miller Named Assistant Director

Three new academic programs coordinators, Donna Brodd, Verna Holoman and Anne-Marie McCartan, have been appointed to the staff of the Council of Higher Education. Margaret Miller assumed the position of assistant director for academic programs January 1.

Miller was a program coordinator prior to her appointment. Before coming to the Council in July 1986, Miller held several positions at Southeastern Massachusetts University during her 13 years there. She was a tenured English professor and assistant to the president. For two years, she served as assistant to the dean of arts and sciences, and she directed the women's studies program at the university for three years. Miller has a bachelor's degree from the University of California at Los Angeles and a doctorate in English from the University of Virginia.

Brodd was chairperson of the Emergency Medical Services educational department at Kapiolani Community College in Hawaii for two years, and was coordinator and chairperson of the nursing and allied health departments at the college for eight years. She has a master's degree in nursing from the University of Colorado, a master's in public health from the University of Hawaii and a doctorate in higher education administration from Kansas State University.

Holoman has been an assistant professor of biology at Virginia State University for five years and also is the director of the Richmond Area Program for Minorities in Engineering (RAPME). She will join the staff in June. She taught biology at several institutions prior to working at VSU. Holoman has a master's and a doctoral degree in zoology from Ohio State University.

McCartan directed the transfer opportunities program at Roxbury Community College in Boston for three years before joining the Council staff. She also has been on the staff of the California Community Colleges Board of Governors and a staff assistant to the director of the American Association for Higher Education. McCartan has a master's degree in public administration from the University of Washington and a doctorate in education from Harvard University.